

Femmes d'Esprit

CNR Honors Magazine

Issue 4 Fall 2006

CNR
Honors



Citizenship, Community, Friendship...

HONOR'S MATTERS

Dr. Amy Bass

PITCH TO PAPI

Because my scholarship tends to revolve around sports and popular culture, I try to avoid making sports analogies whenever I can. I rarely tell students to “go for the first down” or “try to steal second” or that it “doesn’t matter if you win or lose but how you play the game.” Indeed, forget rarely: I have never said any of that to any student, ever.

But now I am going to break my own rule and use a sports analogy, because I think the best advice I can offer as we begin the new school year, and for the Class of 2010 a new college career, is to “pitch to Papi.”

Who is Papi? I will forgive you for not knowing. Big Papi is David Ortiz, the designated hitter of the Boston Red Sox, a team that you if you have been in my office you know that I have a sleight obsession with.

David Americo Ortiz was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 1975, and made his major league debut in 1997. His career is something of Hollywood proportions, one of the all-time great “clutch” hitters, whose record is peppered with dramatic walk-off homeruns. He is an athlete who seems to break a record every time he sneezes, and does so with a lovely spirit of sportsmanship and good humor.

But Papi doesn’t always get the chance to demonstrate his talents at the plate, exemplified by the last showdown between the Red Sox and their arch rivals, the New York Yankees, of the season. The Red Sox, who had been swept by the Yankees up at Fenway in August (a new-fangled Boston Massacre, for you history buffs), came to New York City to make things right, if not to make it into the postseason. And make it right they did – they took the four game series, including a sweep of a double-header that was a lot of fun, at least for me, to watch.

But Papi – who was on the verge of breaking his team’s homerun record – did not have a good weekend. Why? Because the Yankees

would not pitch to him. They chose to intentionally walk him more times than not.

It can, of course, be considered good strategy to walk a player like Ortiz – it limits him to just getting onto first base, rather than hit a ball out of the park. But is it good sportsmanship? Is it gutsy? Is it playing the game? No, it’s playing it safe. It’s eliminating a risk. It’s not believing in a pitcher’s ability to strike someone out.

So when I tell you all to spend your school year “pitching to Papi,” I’m asking you to play the game to the best of your ability. Don’t shy away from a class that you fear might not greet you with the grade you want. Don’t avoid your professors’ office hours because you think you’d just be bothering them. Don’t ignore the student sitting next to you because she runs in a different social circle. Take risks. Challenge yourself. Test others.

In other words, pitch to Papi. Because maybe it will be you that hits one out of the park.

ABOUT THE COVER

When I was told that the theme for this issue of Femmes d'Esprit would be friendship and community, I was instantly reminded of a piece I did last semester for my figure drawing class. The original piece was drawn in charcoal, and the cover is a digital rendition. Because the two hands appear connected, the image portrays a union, a coming together. The two hands join together to form a heart shape, symbolic of friendship and love.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Jeanene James, '08

This summer I participated in an amazing study abroad program based in Alicante, Spain. I spent the month of August studying Spanish at the University of Alicante, and experienced life in a radically different atmosphere. In hindsight, I can easily say that it was one of the best periods in my life, though I must admit it took me a while to make the transition.

It all began on August 1, 2006. I had just arrived at the airport in Alicante following a 9 hour flight. I stood for nearly two hours awaiting my luggage to appear on the hypnotizing circular conveyor belt. As I watch the same six pieces circulate again, and again, I realized that I had no acquaintance with whom to relay my conveyor-belt sorrows. I realized, that I was tired, nervous and alone in a new country. And so began the breakdown. After roaming the small airport for another half hour, I finally located the international arrivals baggage section. Since I had taken a connecting flight from Madrid, the conveyor belt that had hypnotized me for hours earlier hosted only domestic baggage; I was in the wrong place all along.

My luck hardly changed for the next two days. I took a taxi to my new home; an apartment housing five other foreign University students, from places like Italy, France and Germany, with a ferocious ap-

petite for *Paella*, loud music and partying. A rowdy, yet very welcoming bunch at best.

On the first day of classes I boarded a bus (which it took me over an hour to find) and rode an hour away to the main University campus, only to be sent right back. In fact, the annex in which my classes were held, was approximately 2 minutes away from my flat, which means that I had traveled in a huge, conveyor belt-like circle only to end up right where I

began. Nonetheless, I persisted, determined to somehow enjoy my stay in Alicante. The next few days went well. I learned my way around town, my body slowly adjusted to the six hour time difference, and I was thoroughly enjoying the Spanish foods. I had hit my stride. My Spanish improved, I forged friendships

with my house and class mates, I even stopped calling home more than twice per day.

Towards the end of my first week I got in contact with Dr. Segura-Rico, a professor here at CNR, who was passing the summer in Alicante. She, along with her family, met with me soon thereafter and introduced me to a few of the wonderful things that her home city had to offer. I learned of the best beaches, the best restaurants, the tourist attractions, and even the unique nooks that only locals would



The Estudio Hotel located in the heart of Alicante.

Photo: J. James

NEW BEGINNINGS

MEET THE CLASS OF 2010

Dianne Marques

Hi my name is Dianne Marques and I am majoring in International Studies and minoring in Political Science. I hope to one day make a difference with my humanitarian efforts in assisting those who are denied their natural rights. I am a commuter from Yonkers, N.Y. I chose to become a student at CNR not only because it is close to home, but I believe that it will enable me to experience an empowering discovery on my identity and my role as a woman in society. I hope to succeed in challenges that come with the Honors Program as well as meet people who will stimulate my thoughts, ideas and opinions. I hope to contribute talent, loyalty and culture to the honors program.



*Left: The
Freshmen
Honors class
of 2010.
Photo: J. James*

Jaclyn Fedolfi

My name is Jaclyn Fedolfi, and I'm a freshman here at The College of New Rochelle. I am a Communication Arts major with a minor in English. I come from Atkinson, a very small town in southern New Hampshire. I found The College of New Rochelle online while I was searching for the perfect college and decided that it was a great opportunity for me because it is cute, small, and feels like a community. As an honors student, I hope to receive an education that exceeds the average education and will be useful in my future career as a journalist. I also intend to take advantage of the free extra credits available to honors students. Hopefully this college experience will be beneficial to me in an educational sense and on a social level.

Randa Hussein

My name is Randa Hussein and I am majoring in Biology, hoping to pursue a career in pediatrics. I have been working at my local pharmacy for a year, which is one of the reasons why I am strongly attached to the medical field. I was born to Egyptian parents in the capital of Saudi Arabia, and came to this country at the age of three. Ever since then, I grew up in Rockland County, New York with a bilingual background. I chose CNR because I actually know a few people that received their degrees from here, both undergraduate and graduate, and also, the distance between here and my home is commutable. I chose the Honors Program because I want a different education. I want to face a challenging, but rigorous learning experience. I hope to contribute a different perspective to the Honors Community, because I am sure that the diversity that exists is a major part of how each and every one of us thinks.

A CLOSER LOOK:

OUR SUMMER ENDEAVORS

Megan Skrip, '07

As part of an Environmental Protection Agency Greater Research Opportunities Undergraduate Fellowship awarded to me in 2005, I spent 12 weeks this summer working at the USEPA Region II Laboratory in Edi-



son, NJ, in the Department of Environmental

Science and Assessment's Monitoring and Assessment Branch. As a bioassessment intern and primary field assistant to a respected aquatic biologist, I helped perform stream and lake monitoring across New Jersey, sampling benthic macroinvertebrates (larval insects that live on stream bottoms) and fish to gauge the quality of the state's waters. I found this work so fascinating and so fun, that it has significantly influenced me in my pursuit for grad school.

So, what is bioassessment and why is it important?

Bioassessment is a means of measuring ecosystem health by studying specific "indicator" organisms and their responses to their environment:

Certain species of fish and aquatic insects are more sensitive to pollution and habitat alteration than others. So, by examining the composition of an insect or fish community, a scientist can score the "health" of their environment—if a site contains many pollution-tolerant species and few pollution-intolerant ones, then it would receive a low score. Bugs and fish are good aquatic indicators because of their longevity and constant exposure to the water. Sampling the water itself for a particular pollutant presents only a one-time snapshot of conditions and requires testing for a range of chemicals. But, the animals, just by their living, respond to all conditions in the environment to which they are exposed and so present a comprehensive picture of the water quality. The presence/absence of certain species can even be a gauge of the presence of certain types of pollution, but even if a particular problem is not evident, bioassessment is an excellent screen. If an atypical community composition is found, then further testing may be done to find a cause.

During my internship, I performed office, laboratory, and fieldwork as I served as primary field assistant in many different projects for the EPA's aquatic monitoring program. In particular, though, my work focused on the condition of so-called "headwaters" in different regions of New Jersey. Headwaters are "where streams are born," the beginnings of a river system, and consequently are essential in dictating the health of all the waters downstream

Above: Megan in the EPA's oceanic monitoring helicopter.

Photo: M. Skrip

A PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE: CRITICAL RESEARCH ESSAY

Dr. Daniel Garcia

When I packed up my family's things and headed out to New York City to prepare for my new job teaching American and Latin American history at the College of New Rochelle, I had not given much thought to the kind of students I would be interacting with. No doubt, I thought to myself, they were going to be similar to the students I taught in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. I was surprised to find that the young women at CNR shared a hunger for knowledge and shared an eagerness for new perspectives that was less apparent in other institutions. The experience was a distinct and rewarding challenge, to say the least.

Likewise, teaching the Honors Critical Research Seminar has been a rewarding and vastly challenging endeavor. I was immediately struck by the caliber of students and the over all level of maturity. Having taught senior research seminars at other institutions I am continually surprised by the ability of my young students to grapple with the complexities of their research projects and their ability to articulate, to give voice, to the sources that they have unearthed.

The course is designed to teach the student the art of writing a research paper. This means not just coming up with rational and functional topics or arguments (which is much harder than it may seem) but finding and evaluating sources, constructing outlines, and creating annotated bibliographies. The students, moreover, are expected to and have done a wonderful job evaluating each others work as each project has grown from a nascent idea to a full blown paper. Sharing ones work is a intimidating and humbling affair and the students have shown that they not only are able to exhibit their work but likewise able to engage in a constructive dialogue about other projects.

In the first three weeks of the course I exposed the students to two very complicated memoirs concerning the immigrant experience. *The Namesake* and *Down These Mean Streets* were complex reads which tested the students' ability to digest and discuss issues that were

controversial to say the least. What began as a reading seminar quickly changed into writing seminar when I required the students to come up with paper topics, which is an evolving process.

Thankfully, I have been able to treat the course more like a writers' workshop because of the small size of the class, which fosters camaraderie and mutuality. More importantly, the students have demonstrated an amazing professionalism which one would expect from a graduate seminar or a professional writers workshop.

Many of the students, half at least, are science majors who have gracefully adapted to the content and themes of the class. Since I am a historian I have required the students to research modern historical and political themes. The students were required to find their paper topics from articles taken from periodicals issued on their birthdays.

The students succeeded in finding interesting and manageable topics. Many of the works in progress center around the history of Middle East including papers on the Iraq War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and definitions of terrorism. Other projects focus on legal drug addictions, abortion, and the unconstitutionality of the Patriot Act. The diversity of the projects take us from the gentrification of Harlem to the history of UN environmentalism.

The class sessions, or shall I say workshops, have seen intense back and forth sessions between the students who are learning to appraise each others arguments forcing one another to distill and refine their topics. We are all learning that writing is not, or should not, be a solitary impulse or an isolated enterprise, that writers need to have other people look at their work and hear their work read out loud. As it is still the middle of the semester I can not say what the finished manuscripts will look like but the trajectory of the projects and the character and intelligence of students in my little class bespeaks of truly amazing works of art.

Alina Bachmann, '09

A storm within: spells of Depression.

The clouds surround my world.

Hovering overhead
each day, the next I dread.
It begins to rain.
A tear slides down my cheek.

I drag myself to walk-
slow paced and hesitant.
The sky gets darker
as the clouds move in.

A storm is coming.

I grind my teeth in anguish-
an emotional overflow.
I want to scream; I want to cry.
I throw a book against the wall.

Thunder.

Everything in sight
sits on the floor or across the room.
I travel in circles;
my world spirals.

A Tornado.

I close my eyes and scream.
Releasing my storm within.
When my eyes open, everything's okay.
The sun is shining and birds are chirping.

I go on about my day

LOOKING INWARD:

ART: ACCORDING TO ALINA

Alina Bachmann, '09



"Diego"

Oil on paper
Courtesy: A. Bachmann

A CLOSER LOOK:

DON'T VOTE (BEFORE YOU KNOW THE FACTS)

Tung Nguyen, '07

Standing in a room of 2500 inside the Boston Hynes Convention Center, I said the Pledge of Allegiance for the first time since high school. I was partaking in the US Citizenship Oath Ceremony, which lasted for over three hours because I spent two hours just to pass through security checkpoints and waited one hour from the moment I sat down for the judge to arrive. Ordinarily, I am a "very" patient person, but my feet were hurting because I decided to wear heels that day since nothing else went well with the pants I had chosen. So it was after the pledge of allegiance that 2500 people in there room were declared United States citizens and about 471 of whom had a name change. I was one of those people, though many continue to call me Tung (with a silent "g" please). Legally, I am now Tegan Nguyen.

I did not think much about the importance of being an American citizen until after I became one. It was about two weeks before the fall semester started that I understood that being an

American citizen is a privilege. I realized this when my friend, a Vietnamese immigrant like me, announced that he was going to Iraq in one week. I am not a supporter of the war, but how could I have told him that our own government is misguiding us? Instead, I told him that he was brave



and wished I had the courage to take the big steps as he is making.

Courage and patriotism do not have to be shown on the battlefield, another friend told me. An American citizenship provides individuals with educational, financial, and political opportunities. I believe the most important one is to vote, the right that is protected by men and women who decided to risk their lives and joined the war effort. It astounded me that not all US citizens take advantage of this right - or feel that their votes do not matter. In the last two presidential elections, the opposing candidates appeared to have won the popular votes, but lost the presidency to George W. Bush. Although many people felt that the elections were stolen, they had exercised their right to vote. With the upcoming gubernatorial election, American citizens should discuss the candidates' standing and reflect upon their own values and what changes they would like to see. We are then not voting merely because we could, but we would be voting based upon our own beliefs and upon the facts presented. Therefore, I challenge you to take a stand and vote this November. I'll be voting.



Above left: U.S. passport
Above right: A typical swearing in ceremony.

Photo: Yahoo.com

MY LIFE, MY HONORS...

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY COMMUNICATING THE ROLE THAT THE HONORS PROGRAM PLAYS IN THE LIVES OF OUR EXTRAORDINARY SCHOLARS.

MY NAME... Roblyn Rawlins

CHILDHOOD AMBITION... archaeologist/adventurer
(female Thor Heyerdahl)

FIRST JOB... in a garment factory

LAST PURCHASE... yogurt

INDULGENCES... Travel, Scotch, treats for Sophie
shopping & lunch dates
w/ Mommy downtown

FONDEST MEMORY...

SOUNDTRACK...

← RETREAT... Sofa w/ Sophie

WILDEST DREAM... Peace, Love & Understanding

PROUDEST MOMENT... Submitting my dissertation

BIGGEST CHALLENGE... Logistical - getting myse
& my stuff to where
I need to be when I

ALARM CLOCK... need to be there



Dr. Roblyn Rawlins,
Director of Women's
Studies.

PERFECT DAY... Any that end at only, on teaching
The Beachcomber, Wellfleet, MA days

FAVORITE MOVIE... West Side Story

INSPIRATION... The women of my family

MY LIFE... keeps on surprising me

MY HONORS... are teaching the women of CNTR

LOOKING BACK:

A COMMENCEMENT SPEECH TO REMEMBER

Ruth Santiago, '05

Good Afternoon Dr. Sweeney, Fellow Graduates, Faculty, Staff, and Loved Ones,

As a freshman, some of my upperclassmen friends gave me a few words of advice. They told me to hold on because college was going to fly by. I held on tight these past four years. I held on to Maura Lawn greeting me on early mornings from my Ursula Hall window. I held on to the friends I gained on our freshman camping trip. I held on to the countless late night dinners at Rochelle's. I held on to the professors who always had confidence in me. But at the same time, I let go. I let go of high school comforts for college beginnings. I let go of prior beliefs for new ideas. I let go of teenage rebellion for adult maturity. I let go of insecurities for the confidence of being a young CNR woman. Now after four years of ups and downs, moments both lost and gained I'm leaving The College of New Rochelle, and it feels right.

At times, I didn't like to think of graduation and leaving all that I know. At other times, I think we all have said at least once: "I can't wait to graduate." Now, that moment is right before us. Tomorrow is our graduation day. I always thought that I would reach this point with anticipation and excitement, but more than anything, a calm yet strong sense of stillness has come over me. This is our time now, we

worked hard to get here. We pulled all nites, partied too hard, made mistakes, and made improvements, all to get to this point. I invite all of you to take this



Ruth Santiago at commencement, '06

Photo: R. Santiago

moment

to be still and revel in your accomplishments.

I feel thankful to be able to take everything I have gained at The College of New Rochelle with me on a new journey. I entered college unsure of myself and my abilities. My confidence grew throughout the years and I have the faculty to thank for that. I will always appreciate the effort and care the faculty put into my education. We can all agree that the dedication they show is unparalleled. We all remember not going to that one class and bumping into the professor in the cafeteria. As we cringed at our own bad luck and tried to hide, deep down we knew we wouldn't have it any other way. My

UMOJA, A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN

steadfast in its commitment to the education of the next generation of Umoja and asserts that "If you have educated a woman you have educated the world". By incorporating this sense of independence into the African community, sixty small groups aimed at the empowerment of women have emerged to confront the issues that

Non-Governmental Organizations have failed to respond to. The story of the women of Umoja is a profound example of the power of women to make productive changes within the international scheme and should motivate the members of the CNR community that attended the lecture to confront threats to the human rights of women by spreading awareness through the story of the women of the Umoja.

Continued from page 15



Above: Sherrice Lawrence poses with Rebecca Lolosoli

Photo: S. Lawrence



Above: Sherrice Lawrence and Shonda Gaylord of CNR Honors, with another CNR student.

Photo: S. Lawrence